

Characteristics of Smokers Compared with Non-smokers in a Sample of HIV-positive Adults: Data from the Medical Monitoring Project Seattle, WA, 2009-2010

As individuals with HIV live longer, other health conditions and behaviors are affecting their morbidity and mortality. HIV positive individuals are known to have a higher smoking prevalence than the general population. In the U.S., over half of persons infected with HIV are smokers compared with 20% of the general population. Smoking rates among the general population in Washington state are slightly lower, with 15% of Washington residents reporting being current smokers in 2009.¹ For this analysis, data from the Medical Monitoring Project (MMP) were used to describe the prevalence of smoking among individuals living with HIV in King County and to compare characteristics of smokers compared with non-smokers.

MMP is a supplemental HIV surveillance project funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and is conducted in twenty-three project areas throughout the country. MMP collects a wide breadth of information from people living with HIV through in-person interviews and medical record abstractions. Patients are randomly selected for participation from a sample of facilities providing HIV care in each project area. In the current cycle (2010/2011), 12 health care facilities throughout King County are participating in the project. Interview data from King County collected in 2009 and 2010 were used for this analysis (complete medical record data is not yet available for this time period). Participants were asked about smoking status as part of the standard CDC questionnaire and additional smoking questions are asked locally.

Out of 274 King County participants interviewed in 2009 and 2010, 108 (39%) reported being a current smoker and 82% of current smokers reported smoking daily. One-third of the current smokers reported smoking 20 or more cigarettes a day. Over half (57%) of current smokers reported smoking for twenty years or more. Sixty-six participants (24%) reported being ex-smokers, and 100 (36%) reported having never smoked.

Current smokers were significantly more likely to be 50 years or older, be less educated (high school graduates or less), be born in the U.S., report an annual income of less than \$10,000, and report being homeless (including staying with friends or family) in the last year. Those who self-reported their sexual orientation as homosexual or gay were significantly less likely to report being current smokers relative to heterosexuals.

There were no significant differences among race, ethnicity or gender comparing smokers, ex-smokers and non-smokers. Current smokers did not report engaging in risky behaviors such as injection drug use or unprotected sex with an unknown or discordant partner more often than non-smokers, and were neither more nor less adherent to their HIV medication.

Sixty-one percent of current smokers reported that in the last 12 months their provider offered to help them quit smoking. All of the current smokers had a regular HIV health care provider and had at least one visit to their provider in a set four month period. Smokers were not more likely to have frequent visits to their health care provider, more ER or urgent care visits, and were not more likely to report that they had been hospitalized in the last 12 months.

Current cigarette smoking was common among persons living with HIV in this sample. Current smokers were more likely to be 50 year or older, less educated, born in the U.S., low income and have a recent history of homelessness. Every participant who reported being a current smoker had been seen by a provider at least once in a four month period, but over one-third of current smokers had not been asked by their provider if they wanted help quitting smoking. Successful smoking cessation programs that target persons living with HIV need to be developed and barriers to smoking cessation need to be identified and cessation assistance widely offered to people living with HIV.

- *Contributed by Elizabeth Barash*

¹ <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/brfss/display.asp?cat=TU&yr=2009&qkey=4396&state=WA>

Table 1: Medical Monitoring Project, King County, WA, 2009-2010 (N=274)

	Current Smoker N=108		Ex-Smoker N=66		Never Smoker N=100		P Value (current vs. ex/ never)
Age	N	%	N	%	N	%	
<39	33	31%	7	11%	25	25%	
40-49	49	45%	20	30%	47	47%	
50-59	20	19%	26	39%	16	16%	P<.05
60+	6	6%	13	20%	12	12%	
Gender							
Male	93	86%	60	91%	81	81%	NS
Female	14	13%	6	9%	19	19%	
Transgender	1	1%					
Education							
High school graduate or less	49	45%	15	23%	30	30%	P<.05
Some college	43	40%	30	45%	31	31%	
Bachelors degree or higher	16	15%	21	32%	39	39%	
Race							
White	64	59%	44	67%	58	58%	NS
Black	22	20%	8	12%	13	13%	
Latino	11	10%	9	14%	15	15%	
Other	11	10%	5	8%	14	14%	
Born in the United States	103	95%	57	86%	73	73%	P<.05
Homeless in the last 12 months	25	23%	2	3%	4	4%	P<.05
Income							
\$0-\$9,999	47	44%	9	14%	29	29%	P<.05
\$10,000-\$29,999	29	27%	28	42%	37	37%	
\$30,000-\$75,000+	30	28%	29	44%	33	33%	
Sexual orientation							
Homosexual, gay, or lesbian	65	60%	50	76%	72	72%	P<.05
Heterosexual or straight	25	23%	10	15%	19	19%	
Bisexual	11	10%	4	6%	8	8%	
Other	7	6%	6	9%	0	0%	
Do you have a regular provider	108	100%	66	100%	99	99%	NS
Visits to main provider in 4 month period							
1	39	36%	31	47%	48	48%	NS
2-3	34	31%	21	32%	30	30%	
4+	26	24%	8	12%	22	22%	
Injection drug use last 12 months	14	13%	5	8%	6	6%	NS
ER or urgent care visit last 12 months	18	17%	6	9%	15	15%	NS
Hospitalization last 12 months	10	9%	6	9%	8	8%	NS

Table 1 (continued): Medical Monitoring Project, King County, WA, 2009-2010 (N=274)

	Current Smoker N=108		Ex-Smoker N=66		Never Smoker N=100		P Value (current vs. ex/ never)
Provider offer help to help you quit smoking in the last 12 months							
Yes	66	61%	2	3%	NA	NA	
No	42	39%	5	8%	NA	NA	
Not smoking in the last 12 months	0	0	59	89%	NA	NA	
Unprotected discordant sex							
Yes	19/79	24%	11/51	22%	60/80	23%	NS
No	60/79	76%	40/51	78%	20/80	67%	
Currently taking ART							
Yes	92	85%	61	92%	87	87%	NS
No	6	6%	2	3%	4	4%	
Don't know/refused	10	9%	3	5%	9	9%	
Missed ART last two weeks							
0	49/92	53%	31/61	51%	60/87	69%	NS
1	14/92	15%	12/61	20%	12/87	14%	
≥2	11/92	12%	9/61	15%	7/87	8%	
Don't know/missing	18/92	20%	9/61	15%	8/87	9%	
Last time missed ART							
Past week	9/92	10%	6/61	10%	3/87	3%	NS
1-2 weeks ago	14/92	15%	14/61	23%	8/87	9%	
3-4 weeks ago	8/92	9%	5/61	8%	8/87	9%	
1-3 months	16/92	18%	6/61	10%	16/87	18%	
More than 3 months	11/92	12%	10/61	16%	11/87	13%	
Never	23/92	25%	18/61	29%	32/87	37%	